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**'Bakha' in Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* and 'Jabya' in Nagraj Manjule's *Fandry* as Untouchable Characters :
A Comparative Analysis**



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Introduction:

Marginalization is the social process of becoming or being made a group marginal within the larger society or an individual in a group or in a society. Marginalization is also to relegate or to confine a section of people or a person to a lower social standing or outer limit or edge of social standing for example the marginalization of the underclass of people; the marginalization of literature of a class etc. In its extreme form, marginalization can exterminate some group of people in a long term or short-term process in a planned manner or pre decided way from the normal system of society.

It is true to say that basically, marginalization is the unfair or unjust treatment of minority or minorities and weaker individuals or groups by the majority or stronger group of the rest of the society for the supposed benefit of the concerned stronger group or groups of that society.

Making marginalized refers to being separated from the mainstream society and being marginalized refers to being separated from the rest of the society or forced to remain in the fringes or outskirts and not to be at the centre of social or national life. Sometimes marginalized people are not considered as an ingredient or part of the society rather they are thought to be unwanted or negligible in the building of society or nation.

Let us begin by analyzing the treatment given to Bakha in Anand's *Untouchable*. The novel describes a single day in the life of the protagonist Bakha, a scavenger boy. While walking through the street of the town, a caste Hindu gets defiled by Bakha's touch to which he tries to apologize. The people gather around the scene and abuse Bakha. He pleads but no one feels pity for him. The defiled man gives a slap on Bakha's face. For the first time in his life, Bakha is made aware of his status as an untouchable.

Another such an incident can be seen when a Brahmin sees Bakha on the steps and shouts at him for polluting the temple. While climbing down the steps he

finds his sister Sohini standing in the courtyard frightened and speechless. She tells Bakha about the priest's attempt to molest her while she was cleaning his latrine. She further tells him that she screamed out of the fear and the priest came out by shouting that he had been defiled by an untouchable girl. An enraged Bakha decides to look for the priest but Sohini stops him. As both of them, realize their helplessness due to the limitation of their caste.

When Bakha starts shouting for food in front of the Hindu's house, a high caste woman comes out of the house and screams at Bakha for polluting her house. She asks him to clean the drain to get a piece of bread. A woman without touching Bakha throws a chapatti at him as if he is an animal. The son of high caste Hindu is hurt in the quarrel that takes place after the match. When Bakha takes the wounded boy to his house, his mother, instead of giving thanks shouts at Bakha for defiling her son and the house. Colonel Hutchinson, a priest from the church, finds Bakha lonely and takes him to church where he asks Bakha to confess his sin so that he can be converted to the Christian religion. The Colonel's wife shouts at him for bringing a 'bhangi' at her house. Bakha runs away from the church.

During Bakha's psychological transition from innocence to experience, he faces identity crisis. Initially he possesses no awareness of being an outcaste. The kind treatment from the White Tommies and the speech of Mahatma Gandhi make Bakha feels superior to his fellow outcastes and this superiority complex is reflected in his attitude and appearance. He does not live unclean like others scavengers. His intelligence, sensitivity and the air of dignity differentiate him from his fellow outcastes. Bakha is simultaneously an exploited person and a rebel. He is scapegoat of the rigid caste system. Injustice inflicted upon him makes him rebellious. Excessive abuse and insult makes his think about retaliation. At such moments, he feels like a tiger at a bay. Though Bakha has a number of characteristics of a hero, he cannot revolt openly against exploitation as a modern hero does. However, it seen that the idea of revolt

infused in Bakha's mind. There is at least a ray of hope, which is found in Bakha possibly because Bakha happens to be a child of modern India.

The idea of revolt did not infuse in Jabya's mind like Bakha. Instead, he tries to hide his identity of lower caste. However, like Bakha, he is also an exploited person in terms of oppression, injustice and humiliation. So, let us begin by analyzing the treatment given to the character Jabya in Manjule's *Fandry* and his feeling of ashamed of being a lower caste person. There are such incidents through which exploitation of Jabya can be seen. For example, in the school, the teacher always insults Jabya. He uses many bad words for Jabya, his caste and profession. Except, Jabya's best friend, many students insult Jabhya in the school like the teacher.

Another such an incident can be seen when the pig is seen in front of Hindu's house. The couple comes out of the house and sees the pig in front of their house. They call Jabya who happens to be there to catch the pig and throw the pig away. It is considered that to touch the pigs is a very disgusting thing and should only be done by low caste people that is why the couple tells Jabya to do so because he a lower caste person. However, Jabya refuses to do so and insulted by the couple. Jabya's father Kachru is the symbol of passive submission to the exploitation by the high class. He does not blame the high caste for the exploitation but blames Jabya for this fate. He tells Jabya you are born in low caste so you must do whatever you are told to do so.

Despite having the bitter reality throughout his life, Jabya has a crush on Shalu, a classmate, who hails from an upper caste. Jabya dreams of buying fancy clothes that are garish by more urbane standards. He writes letters to her confessing his love for her. When Jabya is not daydreaming about her or at school, he is out with his friend trying to capture an elusive long-tailed sparrow with a slingshot. But Jabya's dream of getting Shalu is shown shattered when Jabya and his family try to catch the pigs around the school campus where all students including Shalu see the incident. Jabya realizes that all the students

including Shalu laughing at him and his family which makes him aware of his status of lower caste and that is why he feels ashamed of being a lower caste person.

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